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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA'S "ANTI-SECESSION" LAW

A) "Both Sides Across the Taiwan Strait Should Not
Miscalculate Each Other and [Two Sides Should]
Understand Correctly the Anti-Secession Law"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" said in an
editorial (12/22):

"Law is a weapon, which is what China learned from
interacting with the international community these
years. China proposes the 'anti-secession law' in
order to not only balance the 'Taiwan Relations Act' on
one hand, but deter the 'public opinion of Taiwan
independence' on the other.

"From the call of enacting the 'unification law' to the
evolution of the current 'anti-secession law', the path
of the adjustment in China's policy toward Taiwan is
clear. The impact is that the allocation of resources
afterwards will be changed accordingly. From the angle
of preparing to conduct a military struggle toward
Taiwan, 'unification' and 'sanctioning the
independence' are two types of war that differ greatly.
The former inevitably needs to occupy Taiwan
effectively, and the latter has a wider range of
options and feasible approaches. Moreover, the
definition of secession and the use of force involved
in the 'anti-secession law' will be used by the Chinese
military as the political guidance to the build-up of
forces and to prepare for war in the future.

"There have been disturbances in cross-Strait relations
for the last five decades, however, the current
political cleavage has never occurred before. China
will adopt the 'anti-secession law' against Taiwan due
to the reason that Taiwan is moving toward
independence. However, the Pan-Blue alliance won the
majority of seats in the legislative elections and does
this explain that Taiwan's current situation is not
entirely what China has imagined? We expect China to
be cautious on legislating the 'anti-secession law,'
not to miscalculate or misjudge the direction of the
public opinion in Taiwan. After all, the biggest task
for both sides across the Taiwan Strait is not to
miscalculate each other."

B) "The United States Warns the Chen administration
[about] what Cannot Be Touched"

Journalist Sun Yang-Ming said in the conservative, pro-
unification "United Daily News" (12/22):

". There has been a change in the fundamental strategic
thinking and the attitude in China's policy toward the
Taiwan issue. The change clearly tells the United
States that China will use force against Taiwan when
the development of the Taiwan issue reaches certain
criteria, and China is thinking seriously about the war
that may possibly break out.

"The change has transferred the argument over Taiwan's
future and the problem of Taiwan independence to a
burden on the United States. Therefore, the United
States has to suffer the possible consequences
accompanied by the political changes in Taiwan. The
United States will inevitably warn the Chen
administration about what cannot be touched, and the
consequences it has to suffer once [what cannot be
touched] are touched."

C) "Beijing's Anti-Secession Bill Will Further Alienate
Taiwan"

The conservative, pro-Unification "China Post" said in
an editorial (12/22):

". [But] the mainland leaders must understand that
their plan to create a legal basis for taking harsh
measures against Taiwan will have grave consequences.
It will radicalize public opinion and prompt even
greater popular support for the independence cause,
making it more difficult for long-stalled bilateral

relations to move forward.

"In the worst case scenario, an escalation of political and military tensions could lead the two sides to a mutually destructive conflict, an unfortunate outcome neither side would want to see.

"For the two sides to return to the negotiating table, the U.S. may have to play a more active role in bridging the gap between Taipei and Beijing exerting its diplomatic influence with the two parties. Washington has been reluctant to mediate in the longstanding cross-Strait dispute. But Beijing's growing tendency to resort to military force should point to the need for the U.S. government to intervene more forcefully. ."

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